

July 1, 1966

Mr. John E. Merriam
Legislative Assistant to Senator Kuchel
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear John:

The best time for me to respond to "the next step" mentioned in our phone conversation was to write it down immediately, which I have done and pass on herewith. I have written the remarks in the form of a letter from me to Senator Kuchel, feeling that I might be too bold in suggesting that he incorporate this into his own letter. However, I would leave this entirely to his and your judgment, and if the Senator feels that he could adopt similar language on his own, it would of course have even more effective impact on the people receiving it.

I should think one could make a very effective initial distribution of this material directly to the presidents of the institutions of higher learning in this country. I think you can be pretty sure that such a letter would receive very studious attention, if not by the president himself, then by those members of the respective faculties whom he recognizes as having the most thoughtful interest in the problems mentioned. There would probably be no harm in addressing a similar communication to the presidents of the major technological corporations, or even using the list of the five hundred largest that Fortune publishes every year. Besides that, I would also send copies to Dr. George Kistiakowsky at the National Academy of Sciences with enough additional copies for him to distribute to the members of his committee on science and public policy. Alternatively, it would not be difficult to arrange a distribution through the Academy to all the members both of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering, which would again make for a very cogent body of informed opinion. It might not be a bad idea to preface these group mailings with the remark that precisely that group is being solicited.

Let me say how delighted I am at the very forthright way in which the Senator took up the issue for his statement for the record; of course, I may have little more than a forlorn hope that something much more tangible may arise out of this as a matter of public policy.

I can see no really good reason why there should be any secret about the inquiry being suggested here but needless to say, I will not do anything on my own about that.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics